

A Copy of a
LETTER
ANENT
A Project, for Erecting a
LIBRARY,
IN
Every *Presbytry*, or at least *County*,
IN THE
HIGHLANDS:

From a Reverend Minister of the Scots Nation now in *England*,
to a Minister of *Edinburgh*.

With Reasons for it, and a *Schem* for Erecting and preserving
these *Libraries*.

EDINBURGH,
Printed by *GEORGE MOSMAN*, in the Year, 1702.

LETTER

AND

A Project for Erecting a

LIBRARY

IN

Every Parish or at least County

IN THE

HIGHLANDS:

From a Reverend Minister of the New Nation now in England
to a Minister of the Old.

With Reasons for it, and a Scheme for Erecting and preserving
such Libraries.



Printed by GEORGE SMITH, in the Year 1793.

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R. S.

YOU may remember, That I had some Discourse with you, when I was in *Scotland*; About Libraries for the *Highlands*, at which time also I shewed you a Schem, about ordering the Libraries. Since that time, I have not been unmindful, of what then I only in general hinted at. My Bodily distempers, together with the small hopes I had, of any great success, hindred me from setting on foot this design; which now at last I have ventured upon. The great examples of Charity, which this Kingdom affords, particularly in what concerns Libraries for the Plantations, have animated and disposed me, to fall to work, and to try what may be done for those in our Native Country, who need such helps and encouragements as much as any. I need not say much about the Reasons for this Undertaking. The Printed Paper which I send you, will shew how great and important they are, and it is likely, your own knowledge and observation, will furnish you with others.

I thought fit to mention the kinds of Books which we intend to purchase; That they who give Books, and not Money may know what sort of Treatises we aim at, and may not put us off with trash. As for Popish Books, and perhaps some others likewises, tho they be not fit for the weaker sort of People; yet for the Library of a Divine they are convenient and necessary, that so they may be the more able to deal with the Adversary. I suppose no body of any discretion or Learning will question this.

At the end of the Printed Paper, you find mention made of the Schem I hinted at; I thought it necessary, ere I make it publick to send it to you, to peruse it, and shew it to the Assembly, or Commission of the Kirk, that such Additions or Alterations, may be made as shall be judged necessary, that so they who intend to assist us, in this Work, may be assured, care will be taken, by those who are in the

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Government to secure and preserve their Charity, and to doe all they can to render the Books useful.

Tho some of the Rules, which are proposed to be observed, in ordering the Libraries, may at first Reading, seem hard, yet upon due consideration, it will be found very necessary, to use a great deal of strictness, and exactness in this Affair. They who know the World, but a little, and have seen the fate of some Libraries, will Reckon the outmost precaution, we can use little enough to prevent what otherwayes, will be unavoidable. It's a work of no small difficulty, to purchase a parcel of good Books, for publick advantage, nor is it less difficult to preserve and secure them for posterity, when they are purchassed.

It would be of some advantage to this design, if you and some others of the Ministry, would write to some Ministers of the Presbyterian way, at *London* to move them to concurr in this Affair: And if to all this were added some endeavours in *Scotland*, to procure some Books, or Money to buy them, we might then hope to get Libraries erected in each Presbytry-Seat of the *Highlands*, and perhaps for *Orkney* and *Zetland*, whose need of Books is likewayes apparent.

I know your sence of these things, and Your Zeal to promote solid Piety, and useful Learning, will prompt you to do your outmost in this undertaking: And no doubt, they who are inspired with true Principles of Charity, and are concerned for the interest of common Christianity will with all chearfulness, accept of this or any other the like opportunity of doing good.

For my own part, I am willing to doe what I can, in this design which I know to be very necessary. And it after all, the success do not answer my wishes, I will sit down satisfied, with my having done the best I could, which I know my good GOD will accept of.

I am not insensible of the opposition and discouragement which this or any other pious and useful Design is sure to meet with. Satan will not be wanting to doe what he can to hinder what tends to the weakening his Interest in the World, of this I have seen too many instances to be daunted thereby. If the Love of GOD prevail in us,

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it will make us despise all such Rubbs and Discouragements, and to goe on in the strength of the LORD, who will not fail us, nor forsake us. He often by weak means and despicable Instruments brings mighty things to pass.

They who know the low estate of Religion in the World, and how fast Popery and Deism, yea and Atheism, prevail every where, will think themselves obliged heartily and zealously to concurr, with all those who take any Rational and feasible course to propagate Christian Knowledge, and to hinder the restless and Wicked Endeavours, of those who labour to corrupt if not to root out our Holy Religion.

Perhaps you have heard what excellent Designs are formed both by the Corporation, and by the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge. They are settling a Correspondence with some Learned and Pious Divines, of Forreign Churches and have sent them a great many Treatises, some of which have been translated into other Languages, for the benefite of these who understand not English.

And whereas the Plantations have been generally neglected, there is now great care taken, to have Ministers sent amongst them and Schools Erected, and good Books provided for them.

I send you the Printed Paper, together with the Project, about ordering the Libraries, that you may have time to prepare matters relating to this designe before the Assembly meets, that what is necessary to be done, may be dispatched with greater conveniencie, amidst the croud of other business.

It is fit to let me know, as soon as you can, what the Assembly resolves, and agrees to, in this matter, that so they that wish well to this Undertakeing, may be encouraged to goe on with chearfulness, when they see that their labour and charge will not be lost.

As to what is said, in the Printed Paper about the poverty of our Nation, which is given as the reason, why we trouble Strangers with this affair. I hope none of my Countrie men will take offence at it: The Truth of this is too much felt at home, and too well known abroad, to be denyed. It were well if such sufferings did awaken

awaken those who are asleep in their Sin, and cure such as are apt to be so fond and proud of perishing things. But if any are so vain and foolish as too Censure this Paragraph, Their best way of confutation, is to take an effectual and speedy course, to provide a competent number of Libraries, for such parts of our native Countrey, as need them most. There is none amongst us here, but will be glad, to see this work Undertaken and finished by these in Scotland whose concern and interest it is chiefly to have it done.

May our good God direct and prosper, all those who sincerely set themselves, to do the best they can, for his Glory and the real happiness, and welfare of men. In which Prayer I know you will readily joyne with

Your affectionat Brother.

An account of a Design about erecting some Libraries in the Highlands of Scotland, for the use chiefly of Ministers and Probationers.

THE Reasons for setting on foot this Design, are,
I. The great scarcity of Books amongst the Ministers in those Parts, some of them hardly having so many as are worth twenty shillings.

II. The small Provision many of them have in the *Highlands* (tho in other parts of the Kingdom, Ministers are for the most part, much better provided for) so that very few of them can spare any thing out of their poor livings towards the purchasing of Books.

III. The great industry of the *Romish Missionaries* amongst them makes it necessary for them to be tolerably provided with such Books, as may enable them to encounter their Adversaries.

IV. The gross ignorance of the People in those parts, together with some late endeavours to reduce the Inhabitants of the Isle of *Hirta* into a state of Heathenism, make it very necessary that they be provided with such Treatises as prove the Truth of the Christian Religion.

V. The excellent Parts and Capacities of the Ministers generally throughout the *Highlands*; as they invite generous and charitable Persons to afford them what assistance they can, in this kind, so they give good ground to expect much fruit from such a Charity.

VI. As such Libraries will be of extraordinary Advantage to the Ministers, so they will be greatly useful to such young men as intend for the Sacred Office, who cannot acquire any tolerable Measure of necessary and useful knowledge, unless they are furnish'd with a sufficient number of good Books.

VII. To all which may be added their great distance from such places, wherethey might either buy or borrow such Books as are useful for them.

To Answer in part the above mention'd Design, it is intended, to have one Library in each County of the *Highlands*; except where there are but few Parishes, in which case, one Library is at first to serve two or three Counties: Their Number may be afterwards increased as Encouragement is given.

The Money or Books which shall be given, may be put into the hands of Mr. *Taylor* a Book-seller at the Ship, or of Mr. *Robinson* at the Golden Lion in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, who will give the Benefactors a note of what Money or Books shall be intrusted to them.

If it be asked, Why we trouble strangers with this affair, and do not transact it altogether among our own Country-men? The Answer in short is this; The Nation's poverty, (occasioned chiefly by their great losses at Sea, the decay of Trade, the great Dearth of Corn, and the Death of Cattle for some Years together, to say nothing of several other things which might be named) renders the People generally unable to do much by way of Charity; nevertheless there are not wanting those amongst them, who amidst their straits and wants, are foreward to promote this or any other good Design, even beyond their Power.

As for those good People in both Kingdoms, who sometime ago, did freely and largely contribute towards the Printing of Bibles in *Irish*, for the use of the poorer sort of *Highlanders*, (the success of which Charitable Work, thro' God's Blessing, hath been very great, even

even beyond our hopes) it is not doubted but they will give all encouragement to this undertaking, either by bestowing such useful Books as they can spare, or by giving Money to buy them. And altho' we know that the Humble and Devout followers of our great Master *Jesus*, desire not to be seen of Men, nor to have their works published to the World; yet as a Motive to others, and in Testimony of Gratitude towards those who encourage this good Design, we purpose to set down in each Book, and in the Catalogues of each Library, the Names of the Benefactors.

*Rules about ordering some Libraries intended
for the Highlands.*

1. **C**ARE is to be taken, the Books be deposited in such places as may best suit the exigences of the Country, especially at such Presbytry-seats as ly in the center of the bounds, which are to be supplied.

2. That they be intrusted to the care of the Minister and School-master of the place, unless there be two Ministers Officiating there, in which case they may have the charge of the Books.

3. That the Books be kept under Lock and Key in good and strong presses, to be placed in a pure and dry Air free from Dampness.

4. That each press have two Locks and two Keys, whereof one Key is to be in the hands of the Minister, and the other of the School-master, unless there be two Ministers serving at the place, and then each of them may have a Key.

5. Some Books being of so general Use, that to lend them abroad, were the ready way to frustrate the Design. Therefore it may be specified by an Act of the Synod or Presbytry of the bounds, what Books in their List, shall not be lent abroad.

6. That no Books be lent to any, but Preachers or School-masters, or Students living within such Bounds, as shall be assigned by the Presbytry, Synod or Assembly.

7. That

7. That he who borrows any Book, Consign a fourth part more than the real Value of it; thereby to prevent the turning the Libraries, into Book-sellers Shops.

8. Besides, the Borrower of any Treatise ought to enter his name into a Book of the Library to be provided for that purpose, together with the time in which he is to restore it, upon pain of forfeiting the Money consigned. This seems likewise needful to prevent the embezzelling of the Books.

9. That they who live at places 15 or 20 Miles distant, be obliged to restore the Book they borrow within a Fourtnight, if an 8vo. within three weeks, if a 4to. within a Month or 6 Weeks, if a Folio. They who live a great way further, may be allowed a week or fourtnight more, but a long time ought not to be granted, that so others who need the help of such Books, may have the benefit of them.

10. When it happens, that the Money which was consigned is forfeited, care should be taken, that it be not bestowed without the Advice of the Synod or Presbytry of the bounds, or of a Committee appointed for such occasions.

11. That each Presbytry and Synod, have a Catalogue of the Books appropriated to their bounds.

12. That besides the abovementioned Catalogue, there be likewise a List of the Books in each Library, fairly written upon a large sheet of Paper or Parchment, and placed conveniently in the Apartment where the Presbytry or Synod of the bounds does meet; that so both Ministers and Probationers, may the more readily know what Books there are to be borrowed when they have occasion for them.

13. That the Presbytry once every half Year, visit the Library or Libraries of their bounds; and that they make report to the Synod of their Diligence, and in what condition they found the Books &c.

14. That the Synod likewise once in two or three Years, send some of their Number to inspect the publick Library or Libraries in their bounds, and to report in what case they are, and how these and other necessary Rules, which shall be thought upon are observed.

15. That

15. That the Library-Keepers do not presume to exchange the Books.

16. If any Book which is lent, be spoilt, torne, or in any sort abused. In this case, they who have the charge of the Books, shall not restore the Money Configned, till first they have acquainted the Presbytry or Synod of the bounds, where it may be determined what shall be done.

17. That care be taken, the persons who shall be appointed Depositories of the Books be Responsible Men and of blameless Reputation.

18. That they who are intrusted with the Charge of the Books, give good Security to leave them in as good case as they were in, when they were first intrusted with them.

19. That in case of the removeal of the persons who have this Trust, they be obliged to make good what Books are wanting, or spoilt and abused, or in case of their decease, their Heirs do it.

20. That they who have the charge of the Books, may know what Money to require to be Configned by those who borrow any of them, it will be convenient either for the Synod of the bounds, or some other Ecclesiastical Judicature, by some of their Number best skilled in Books, to assign the prices of each Book in their publick Library as they may be bought in *Scotland*, withal reckoning for the charge of Transporting them. The prices of the Books may be inserted in the Catalogues.

21. If it happen that any one, or both the persons who have the charge of the Books, have occasion to go a great way from home. It will be necessary the Keyes be left behind them, in the hands of persons of Integrity and Discretion, who may either lend out or receive in the Books, always observing the Conditions abovementioned.

22. If the Minister or School-masters place become Void by Removeal, Death, or otherways; The Presbytry of the bounds, shall nominate others in their stead, for the charge and trust of the Books.

23. That upon the delivering of the Books at first to those, who shall be intrusted with the keeping of them, the condition of every Book

Book be, as to Binding and otherways, expressed in writing, by the inspection of two or more, who shall be Deputed by the Presbytry or Synod of the bounds for that effect.

24. That for the greater security, the List of the Books be insert in the Register of the Presbytry and Synod of the bounds.

25. That no Gentleman who is not a Benefactor to the Library, have the privilege of borrowing any Books.

26. No Book shall be lent, unless the person who comes for it bring with him conveniencies to carry it without damage.

27. No person at one time, shall have more then two Books.

28. If any do neglect to return any Book by the time limited, the Librarian shall take care to send him notice, the charge of which message he shall pay, besides the forfeiture.

29. That it be marked on each Book, to what Library and County it belongs.

Courteous Reader,

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of this Letter, is a Person who hath a great Zeal for propagating the Knowledge of GOD, in the Highlands of Scotland, and is the same who did promote Contributions for the Printing of Bibles in the Irish Language, and sent so many of them down to Scotland; And there is no news he more earnestly desires to know, than what the G. A. doth when ever it meeteth, for promoting the Interests of the Gospel in the Highlands.

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Common Reader

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